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New York

Chairman: Mr. Valencia Rodriguez . . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda items 53 to 66, 68 to 72 and 153 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Ngo Quang Xuan (Viet Nam) *(interpretation from French)*: On behalf of the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, I should first of all like to congratulate you warmly on your election as Chairman. I should also like to congratulate the other Committee officers. I should like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's highest esteem to Ambassador von Wagner of Germany, the previous Chairman, for his outstanding contribution to the Committee's work at its last session.

I assure you of the full cooperation of our delegation in securing success in the Committee's proceedings.

Last year we continued to witness enormous changes at the world and regional levels, which have had a tremendous impact on every country and region. Mankind continues to face as many opportunities as challenges, which requires a common effort to support and promote the cause of peace and cooperation, to ensure the prosperity of all countries and of the concert of nations.

We are pleased to note that progress has been made in the search for solutions to conflicts in the Middle East and South Africa. The threat of a world war, of extermination, is receding, although many serious ethnic, religious and territorial conflicts continue or have flared up once more. The stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the risks posed by the illicit proliferation of fissile material continue to threaten all countries, large or small, and deserve the special attention of the international community.

This shows that the end of the cold war has not eliminated the threat to mankind posed by both nuclear and conventional weapons. This is why general and complete disarmament under effective international control remains our ultimate goal and would help ensure the security of all nations.

In this connection, we are pleased to note the positive developments that have taken place since our last session, including: the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty; the strengthening of the biological weapons Convention decided upon by the States parties at the Special Conference at Geneva from 19 to 30 September 1994; and the accession of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Georgia to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The chemical weapons Convention signed in early 1993 at Paris, the biological weapons Convention and the NPT are the fruits of the international community's multilateral efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction.

Undoubtedly, the Non-Proliferation Treaty has to date been the most important international instrument on nuclear disarmament, as almost 165 States have acceded to it, including all five nuclear Powers. It should indeed be extended. However, we must emphasize that its discriminatory nature is undeniable and that some articles must be improved to make it more relevant.

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With regard to the extension of the Treaty, Viet Nam supports the proposal put forward by the non-aligned countries at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the review and extension Conference, held at Geneva from 12 to 16 September 1994: that the extension of the NPT should be closely linked to measures to eliminate nuclear weapons. These measures comprise the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, of a treaty prohibiting the production and stockpiling of fissile material, security assurances to non-nuclear States against the use of nuclear weapons and the access of non-nuclear-weapon States to nuclear technology and equipment for peaceful purposes.

Confidence-building measures are indispensable and cannot be disassociated from the process of building peace, security and development. In several regions, efforts have been under way to find ways and means to encourage cooperation for peace, stability and development on the basis of mutual understanding and respect, with the consent of all countries concerned.

Viet Nam is entirely aware that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones was one of the prerequisites for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

We are pleased to note that the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/71, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, by consensus, and that the Latin American and Caribbean region has become the first nuclear-weapon-free zone following the recent ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco by Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Saint Lucia and the announcement by Cuba that it intends to follow suit. We also welcome the efforts of African countries to ensure that Africa too should become a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We hope to see the establishment of several other nuclear-free zones.

Viet Nam's credo of friendship with all countries has led it to follow an open foreign policy, a policy that has been characterized by the diversification and multilateralism of its foreign relations. In this foreign policy, Viet Nam gives top priority to enhancing friendly relations and cooperation with countries of the region. We are pleased to note that our foreign policy is in complete harmony with the general trend throughout the world, and specifically in South East Asia, where trust and cooperation are replacing the distrust and confrontation which had existed over the decades.

Viet Nam advocates that countries in the region should work on what they have in common, settle their differences and solve disputes, including those relating to the Eastern Sea through bilateral and multilateral negotiations among the parties directly concerned without the threat or use of force. The Regional Forum held by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the security of the region, held at Bangkok last July, with the participation of 18 countries from the region and elsewhere, is an additional confidence-building measure.

These are the common denominators contributing to ensuring peace, stability and cooperation in the region and to the building of a South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Never before has our Organization been called upon to participate in so many important, difficult and complex duties in all areas — political and economic as well as military. On the threshold of a great event, the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995, we must ensure that the Organization will be able to perform its global role in response to the expectations of the entire international community in resolving the primary problems of the survival of mankind, as well as in preparation for our voyage towards the new millennium.

Mr. Bhatia (India): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that, under your wise and able guidance, our deliberations this year will be successful. We would also like to pay warm tribute to Ambassador von Wagner of Germany for his distinguished stewardship of this Committee. I assure you of the full support of my delegation in accomplishing your duties. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the newly elected officers of the Committee.

Since the beginning of the present decade, this Committee has heard many statements welcoming the end of the cold war and the resulting transformation of the political landscape. No doubt this has been a remarkable development. The diminishing of the confrontation between the two power blocs gives hope for forging a consensus for a new international security order. During the last five years, we have also heard many speakers talk about the window of opportunity that has opened for pursuing new disarmament initiatives with a view to strengthening international peace and security. We believe that we have yet to exploit this window of opportunity.

Certainly some developments have taken place in recent years. The bilateral Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) between the United States and the Russian Federation deserves to be welcomed. The recent understanding that both countries will try to implement the Treaty in an accelerated mode is particularly heartening. But this will still leave the two countries holding approximately 7,000 strategic weapons, each 10 to 50 times the size of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. We are therefore convinced that much more needs to be done in order to achieve the objective set out in the very first, resolution adopted by this Committee, General Assembly resolution 1 (I):

> "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction".

We have successfully created norms against biological and chemical weapons and have further strengthened these with legal treaties that enjoy widespread adherence. Unfortunately, the international community has been unable to do the same with regard to nuclear weapons.

We believe that the international community stands at a critical moment in history. The decisions that we take will shape the destiny of the world in the coming century. India remains committed to participating in all global initiatives that can lead to the attainment of the objective of a world free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. During Prime Minister Narasimhe Rao's visit to Washington in May, he and President Clinton issued a joint statement offering their strong support for efforts towards the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and towards the progressive reduction in numbers of such weapons, with the goal of their total elimination. Later in the year, during Prime Minister Narasimhe Rao's visit to Moscow, he and President Yeltsin issued a joint declaration reiterating their commitment to all measures aimed at the complete and universal elimination of weapons of mass destruction. These are positive signals. We have therefore decided to introduce a new draft resolution in this Committee, recalling the pledge we made in 1946 and recommending that the subject of the elimination of nuclear weapons be taken up with the utmost priority, as it merits. The Conference on Disarmament seems to us to be the most appropriate forum for taking up consideration of this subject.

In 1988, at the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, the third special session devoted to disarmament, India put forward an action plan for ushering in a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order (A/S-15/12, annex I). It is a source of some satisfaction that some of the steps suggested in the action plan now enjoy consensus. The negotiations on a chemical-weapons Convention have been concluded, and 157 countries have already become signatories. An Ad Hoc Committee was set up by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva at the beginning of the year for negotiations leading to a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. At the last session of the General Assembly, consensus was reached on negotiations aimed at prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapons purposes.

India has played an active role in the negotiations on a comprehensive test ban. We believe that such a treaty should ban nuclear tests by all States, in all environments and for all time. Only such a treaty can inhibit proliferation in both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions. The verification regime, like the treaty itself, must be universal in its application and non-discriminatory in character. Ambassador Marin Bosch of Mexico deserves our compliments for his tireless efforts as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to move the process forward. We hope that the negotiations can be concluded at the earliest possible time.

On the question of a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear-weapons purposes, India was and remains in favour of setting up an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate based upon the existing consensus. Such an agreement should be negotiated multilaterally and must be verifiable by an international body. It is unfortunate that consensus on a mandate was not reached in the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that, at its present session, the First Committee will generate the required political will in order to encourage the Conference to adopt a negotiating mandate at the commencement of its 1995 session. We would like to thank Ambassador Shannon of Canada who, as Special Coordinator, has carried out intensive consultations on this subject during the current year.

In 1986, Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev jointly declared that a nuclear war cannot be won and, therefore, must never be fought. For many years this remained only a declaration. Today we witness the beginning of a change. Detargeting missiles and lowering the alert status of strategic systems by some countries are positive but essentially limited steps because they are so easily reversible. If the 1986 declaration is to be implemented, then as a first step there must be less reliance on nuclear

weapons and the norm against the use of nuclear weapons must be established. India has therefore called for a convention on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Such a convention, with universal adherence, would combine both the positive and the negative security assurances which have long been demanded by the non-nuclear-weapon States.

During the cold-war years we witnessed the spiralling costs of the arms race, fuelled by scientific and technological research and development. Science and technology are intended to be the servants of peace, not the masters of war. The military research and development programmes of today will lead to an arms race tomorrow. The only way to tackle this problem is to bring about greater transparency so that scientific and technological developments will be used for peaceful purposes.

Innovations are also required to tackle verification issues, problems of conversion and the elimination of treaty-limited weapons systems. For three years these subjects were under consideration by the Disarmament Commission. Unfortunately, the Commission has been unable to come up with consensus recommendations. Nevertheless, we believe that addressing the qualitative aspects of the arms race is an important issue. We believe that the Secretariat has done useful work in developing criteria for technology assessment. This has been welcomed by the General Assembly and remains valid. We hope that Member States will also provide their views on possible criteria and the steps to be taken for setting up national technology-assessment panels.

The States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be meeting next year to review and take a decision on the extension of the Treaty. India is not a party to the Treaty for reasons that are well known. We have maintained that, in its present form, the NPT is discriminatory. The fact that it has not succeeded fully in its objective of halting the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons is due to its discriminatory character.

The non-aligned countries parties to the NPT have already addressed this issue in a paper presented at the third session of the Preparatory Committee. We hope that the States parties will use the occasion of the 1995 Conference to take the necessary steps to convert the NPT into an instrument for achieving genuine non-proliferation. As was stated by our Prime Minister in January 1992 at the Security Council summit meeting, to be effective, that global non-proliferation meeting must be universal, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and linked to the goal of complete nuclear disarmament.

The expansion of ad hoc export-control regimes, which attempt to deny access to developing countries of high technology because of perceived proliferation concerns, reflects a short-sighted approach. Such regimes are arbitrary, inequitable and discriminatory. Many of these technologies have significant applications in the civilian sector which can help developing countries to overcome the obstacles to achieving their socio-economic development goals. In order to effectively tackle proliferation concerns, these export-control regimes need to be made transparent and able to distinguish between civilian and non-civilian applications. An effective chemical-weapons Convention and a reinvigorated biological-weapons Convention should make the Australia Group redundant. A treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons would make the Nuclear Suppliers' Group redundant. The setting up of an international space agency, along with proposals to tackle ballistic-missile proliferation, would make the Missile Technology Control Regime redundant. Only when non-proliferation objectives are backed by universal and non-discriminatory treaties can export controls serve to strengthen such regimes.

Another welcome trend has been the reduction in global defence expenditures. India's defence expenditure, as a proportion of its gross domestic product, has also declined over the past few years and in 1993 amounted to 2.4 per cent of gross domestic product. In the preceding five years, it registered a negative growth rate of almost 5 per cent. It is relevant to recall that all the developing countries put together account for only 16 per cent of global military expenditures. India has always stood for curbing excess military expenditure and for ensuring that resources freed as a result of disarmament should be diverted to development activities. Unfortunately, we have seen the peace dividend evaporate into greater subsidies for arms suppliers. A related dimension of this is the illicit arms trade which, despite its linkages to terrorism and drug trafficking, has not been reflected in multilateral exercises devoted to increasing arms transparency.

India recognizes that the regional approach can help supplement efforts for global disarmament. However, each region must be defined taking into account the full range of security concerns of the countries involved. Artificial geographical constructs for regions or subregions are unlikely to yield any result. Furthermore, the regional approach is dependent upon consensus-building. The unique characteristics of the East-West divide yielded the experience of the Conference on Security and Cooperation

in Europe, but it is unlikely that this pattern can be replicated in other regions of the world. India's approach in its own region has been to negotiate confidence-building measures with each of its neighbours based upon the dynamics of the bilateral relationship and upon mutuality of interests.

The United Nations framework for pursuing disarmament and security was created during the cold war. This was a period of seeking security through deterrents. Today, we need to seek a system of cooperative security that can address our concerns in a comprehensive manner and that is not based on the militarization of international relations. I am confident that under your chairmanship, Sir, the deliberations of the First Committee will be able to make progress in this direction.

Mr. Al-Faihani (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, it is gives me great pleasure to extend to you, Sir, my delegation's sincere congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee this year. We are confident that your experience will help us achieve our desired goals. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I reiterate my delegation's eagerness to cooperate with you in the pursuit of our goals at this session. I also wish to thank your predecessor, Ambassador von Wagner, for the efforts he made during his chairmanship at the last session.

Our world is experiencing a succession of rapid changes in international relations as a result of the end of the East-West confrontation. There have also been drastic changes arising from the confidence of States that they have a fresh opportunity to establish a new world order on the basis of United Nations principles regarding the maintenance of international peace and security.

The rapid train of events in international relations over the past few years are of paramount importance in the establishment of that order. Any observer of international relations over these years will have seen that instability has persisted in many parts of the world. Thus, in order to establish peace and security, international relations must be based on the following principles: peaceful coexistence among the peoples of the world; non-interference in the internal affairs of States; respect for the sovereignty and independence of States and for the peaceful resolution of conflicts; prohibition of the use of force; and the mutual interests of all nations.

The great contribution of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security is highly praiseworthy. Since its establishment, the international Organization has sought to ease hotbeds of tension throughout the world. It has had recourse to peace-keeping operations: more than 20 of them, despite the paucity of international resources. As a result of the onerous burden shouldered by the United Nations, we have noticed in the past two years a trend among States to turn to regional organizations in the settlement of regional conflicts. In this respect, my delegation wishes to stress the importance of the relationship between the United Nations and the regional organizations, which is the foundation of world peace and security.

The challenges and threats to international peace and security are many and complex. They are manifested in the stockpiling of weapons — especially weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery — armed conflicts, and such economic and social imbalances as dire poverty, the spread of disease and narcotics, racial and religious discrimination and the deterioration of the environment.

If limits were put on weapons of mass destruction, more funds could be released to deal with such problems. The world needs conventions and agreements limiting these weapons, but we should not confine ourselves merely to that. Rather, we should plan the complete elimination of these weapons since, apart from the exorbitant cost of their production and stockpiling, they pose a threat to the existence of mankind. Their destruction would release additional funds for development.

Any observer can see that the level of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, far exceeds the security and defence requirements of countries. States Members of the United Nations, must therefore support the trend towards limiting and reducing those weapons. Notwithstanding quantitative reductions in weaponry in the context of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces, and the SALT Treaty, there are still colossal numbers of weapons, especially nuclear weapons, which are a source of grave concern. If countries wish to live in peace and security, those possessing huge arsenals must reach agreements on further reductions of stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction — especially nuclear weapons, which are the most lethal weapons of all — as a first step towards the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

This year there have been a number of achievements in the field of disarmament. In recent months, the negotiating process has begun in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive test-ban

treaty. Efforts are continuing to prepare for the 1995 review conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At the same time, we are pleased to note that many countries are eager to accede to the NPT.

This prompts us to mention the important steps taken to curb the proliferation of lethal weapons. We believe that the international community now has an opportunity to move forward decisively in the field of nuclear disarmament. We also believe that the preparations for the 1995 NPT Review Conference are important for conducting an open and constructive dialogue on the future of the non-proliferation regime. At the same time, any tangible progress on nuclear disarmament measures will have a positive effect on the nuclear non-proliferation regime and on the outcome of the 1995 Review Conference.

We think that the whole question of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is gaining importance in the international community and all the multinational disarmament forums, including the Conference on Disarmament. The international community must therefore focus on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery on an urgent basis because of the threat such weapons pose to mankind. On that basis responsibility for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction lies with all countries that desire to acquire, manufacture or enhance the technology of such weapons.

Regional security is closely linked to international security. In recent years we have noted the increased importance the international community attaches to the maintenance of peace and security in certain regions. In our region, the Middle East, this year has witnessed many developments in the ongoing peace negotiations. We hope that this augurs well for the establishment of lasting peace in the region in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). These developments culminated in the signing on 4 May of a self-rule agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel and the installation of a self-rule authority in Jericho and Gaza. Moreover, Jordan and Israel signed the Washington Declaration on 25 July. We hope that those agreements represent the first steps towards détente in the peace process on both the Syrian and the Lebanese tracks and mark the beginning of a solution to the question of Palestine.

Peace and security in the Middle East require confidence-building, which cannot be achieved unless we can establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and ensure that the region is free of weapons of mass destruction. In that connection his Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, speaking in the General Assembly, stated:

> "I should like to reaffirm here our full support for the policy of freeing the Middle East region from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and, accordingly — bearing in mind its capability in this field — we call upon Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 6)*

We are fully confident that the creation of a Middle East free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and the accession of the region's countries — particularly those with nuclear capability — to the NPT will contribute to the social and economic progress of the countries of the region. We believe that when the Middle East region is free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction the benefits will not be limited to international peace and security but will include the social and economic development of the entire region, since the funds released will be devoted to the socio-economic sphere, which will enhance the living standards of the population.

In conclusion, I must reiterate the need to implement United Nations resolutions on disarmament, especially all Conventions in that field as well as resolutions dealing with international law. This would help to create a climate conducive to peace and security. We are confident that ongoing efforts in this field will eventually create such a climate and that mankind will overcome all existing impediments to peace and security.

Mr. Shah (Nepal): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other officers of the First Committee, on the your well-deserved elections to your important posts. We are confident that your experience and diplomatic skills will guide the deliberations of the Committee to a fruitful conclusion. We assure you of our full cooperation in the Committee's work.

My delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his thought-provoking opening statement to the Committee on 17 October.

The recent changes in East-West relations and the easing of tensions on the international political scene have provided an unprecedented opportunity for arms control and disarmament. We must seize this opportunity to consolidate previous achievements and to chart a constructive course for future action in this field.

My delegation welcomes the recent accession of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nepal considers the NPT to be an instrument of great significance, and we are eagerly looking forward to participating in the forthcoming NPT review and extension conference in April 1995. We strongly believe that the success of that conference will depend largely on contributions from both the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States towards achieving consensus on various provisions of the Treaty.

In Nepal's view, a number of critical issues are yet to be addressed in strengthening the NPT regime. The conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty is one critical area. This needs to be accompanied by a ban on the production and export of fissile materials for weapons purposes. We attach equal importance to deeper cuts in the nuclear-weapons stockpile. Until complete nuclear disarmament is achieved, the security of non-nuclear-weapon States must be protected from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Effective and verifiable implementation of these measures will promote complete nuclear disarmament in our generation.

My delegation welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. However, it is our opinion that to enhance transparency in the field of convention weapons there is a need to expand the scope of the Register further. Nepal is against the export and use of antipersonnel land-mines, which must be fully controlled through an effective verification mechanism. Outlawing the use of these inhumane weapons, which have taken the lives of so many innocent civilians and have disabled many more, needs the immediate attention of the international community.

It is encouraging to note that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction has been signed by a large number of countries. The early entry into force of the Convention will expedite the achievement of the goals set in the Convention.

Nepal supports the addition of an effective verification mechanism to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

My delegation considers arms control and disarmament at the regional and the global levels as complementary. We welcome Cuba's recent announcement of its desire to accede to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), which paves the way for early entry into force of the Treaty, making the whole of Latin America a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We are also hopeful that a treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone covering the African continent will be adopted soon. Such nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the South Pacific nuclear-free zone and the Antarctic Treaty, cover a large area of the globe. It is in the same spirit that we support the proposal to make South Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We urge the international community to support regional efforts and processes for disarmament.

The United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament are working as important forums for promoting the regional arms-control and disarmament process. These centres should be strengthened, with adequate financial and human resources. We particularly urge the United Nations to support the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, based in Kathmandu. Nepal is fully supportive of the Centre, and urges the international community to extend its support to make the Centre an effective instrument for peace and disarmament in the region. We take this opportunity to state our appreciation for the generous contributions made by Governments, non-governmental organizations and foundations, which have enabled the Centre to undertake the substantive activities that make it an important, active forum to bring together diplomats, academics and specialists in strategic studies on possible approaches to regional disarmament in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. Grima (Malta): Mr. Chairman, as this is the first time I am speaking in this Committee, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and to pledge my delegation's support in your efforts towards the successful completion of the tasks before us.

In a world in which States are increasingly being gnawed from within by ethnic strife and tribal conflict, it

was expected that the end of the cold war and the "new world order" would be viewed as two complementary but at the same time very distinct concepts. The end of the cold war has given the United Nations, for the first time in its history, an opportunity to fulfil the vision of its founding fathers. Curiously, the "new world order" has made the fulfilment of that vision seem an almost unrealistically utopian design.

A glance at peace-keeping around the globe, from Somalia to Haiti, from Rwanda to Bosnia, quickly reveals the sometimes bruised, sometimes bloodied, sometimes starved hands outstretched to United Nations peace-keeping. Peace-keeping missions authorized by the Security Council in the last 12 months vividly illustrate the diverse new-world-order expectations of the United Nations. Most therefore agree that whatever the nature of the new world order that is emerging, it brings with it both new opportunities and new challenges, as recent developments in the Middle East have demonstrated.

One such area where very visible and dramatic changes have taken place is that of disarmament. Hence, one essential task of our Committee is, clearly, to identify as precisely as possible where the new opportunities and new challenges lie.

There comes a point where the whole international community needs to be involved in the processes that are unfolding. The effort to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons is such a process, a process which is evolving on a number of fronts that are, to a greater or lesser degree, mutually reinforcing.

My Government welcomes the progress made in the negotiations in Geneva on an effective, multilateral, universally applicable and verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, and is encouraged by the draft text sent to this Committee by the Conference on Disarmament. Also, my delegation applauds the restraint by nuclear-weapon States in testing their nuclear devices. In this context, we, like others, express our concern when, at this critical stage in the Geneva negotiations, the de facto moratorium fails to be observed by all the nuclear-weapon States.

Another important step towards the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime would be a decision by the Conference on Disarmament to set up an ad hoc committee to negotiate a universal, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Similarly, we would support the strengthening of the Missile Technology Control Regime, which would curb further the expansion of delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the centrepiece of the non-proliferation regime and, hence, the grave responsibility the 1995 review conference places upon the entire international community is self-evident. The Government of Malta believes that for 25 years the Treaty has played a pivotal role in preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons. For this reason, we remain of the firm opinion that the wider interests of the international community lie in the Treaty's indefinite and unconditional extension next year. We welcome the recent accessions to the Non-Proliferation Treaty of Georgia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, bringing the total number of signatories to 165. We urge those States not yet party to the Treaty to join as non-nuclear-weapon States by the time of the review conference.

The ultimate objective of universal adherence could best be secured through the international community adopting an energetic attitude towards countries that seek to obscure their nuclear-weapon-production activities behind the decision not to participate in the NPT. Equally important would be a combination of measures designed to give enhanced credibility to the role of the five nuclear-weapon States. Such measures should at least include strong and legally binding assurances of non-use of nuclear weapons against States not possessing such weapons. In this connection, an interesting proposal has been put forward in this Committee by the representative of Australia for a Security Council resolution that would prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. This proposal deserves further consideration.

Forming part of what the Secretary-General has described as the triad of global treaties concerning weapons of mass destruction, is the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. That Convention has now been signed by 157 States, including my own. My delegation anticipates the early entry into force of the Convention.

The strengthening of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on

Their Destruction through the addition of a legally binding and effective verification regime is equally important.

The proliferation and uncontrolled transfer of conventional armaments continue to demand the attention of the international community. Many are in agreement that steps to enhance the transparency of conventional armaments levels constitute a useful confidence- and security-building measure in themselves, while at the same time promoting the process of conventional-arms reduction. At the heart of these efforts lies the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Clearly, the data submitted by some 90 Governments, my own included, is encouraging. However, the scope of the Register can never be fully realized without the widest possible participation. While expressing its continued support for the Register, my delegation regrets that the so-called New York Group was unable to reach consensus on expanding the Register's scope by including data on military holdings and procurement through national production. It is our hope that this can be achieved at the next gathering of governmental experts.

The United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements have a complementary rather than a competing role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security. It was with this in mind that in January 1992, at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, held in Prague, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta proposed that the CSCE declare itself a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. This proposal was formalized at the Helsinki follow-up meeting and was subsequently endorsed by the CSCE summit of Heads of State or Government in July 1992.

Today, there is a wider and increasing awareness of the importance of consolidating this concept, as reflected by the recent meeting in New York between the Secretary-General and heads of regional organizations. The ultimate objective of such cooperation is that global and regional organizations, equipped with separate but convergent mandates, should become partners in a common purpose: that of contributing towards the development of a fair, equitable and consequently long-lasting process of security. This is increasingly the case in the European experience, as the United Nations has during the past year strengthened its cooperation with regional organizations in our region, in particular with the CSCE.

My Government shares the view of the European Union, as expressed by the representative of Germany, that the CSCE Forum for Security Cooperation plays a crucial role in regional security. The security Forum negotiates on matters ranging from conventional-arms control to non-proliferation and has broken new ground by agreeing to principles on the transfer of conventional arms, stability measures for regional crises, the exchange of information on defence planning, and a programme for military cooperation and contacts. Similarly, my delegation considers the Open Skies Treaty to be a unique confidence- and security-building measure and looks forward to its early entry into force.

Malta's commitment to the CSCE process is a demonstration of its full engagement in European security and cooperation.

Among the most significant developments that have undoubtedly contributed to enhanced security and cooperation in Europe is the 1986 Single European Act. The Union has now moved beyond the process of political cooperation initiated then towards the objective of a common foreign and security policy. Malta's application for full membership of the European Union, in itself, testifies to the support of my Government for this important political evolution in Europe.

More than 200 years ago, the great English writer Samuel Johnson wrote that the grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. Two hundred years later, that remains true. There is now, however, also a painful awareness that multiple sources of instability plague the Mediterranean region. Dangerous levels of armaments and severe economic imbalances exist. Both in terms of quantity and in terms of destructive potential, the flow of armaments into the region is indeed daunting. Addressing a symposium held in Tunis in November 1992, my Foreign Minister, Mr. Guido de Marco, said:

> "An analysis of the situation portrays dangers, divisions and disparities. Some have described the situation in our region as a time bomb with an ever-shortening fuse. Ours, I believe, is the responsibility to defuse this time bomb."

Two separate perspectives influence the manner in which Malta today looks at questions of Mediterranean security and cooperation.

One of these is defined by geographical location. Situated at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, Malta has

historically had a very close involvement in the vicissitudes of the region. For Malta, the Mediterranean Sea is not simply its only frontier with neighbouring States; it is a shared area of common interest and activity with these States. All major, and most minor, events in the area have a direct and intimate bearing on Malta's own national life, in terms both of security and of economic well-being. As a consequence, the quest for regional stability and cooperation has a much deeper and more pervasive significance for Malta than it normally has for many other countries.

The other perspective is defined by Malta's overriding political objective of becoming a member of the European Union. What is generally described as Malta's European vocation may, in comparison with the realities of geography, be considered as a deliberate choice from a set of equally available options. We in Malta see things differently, taking it for granted that history is as much an imperative as geography in determining geopolitical options.

As a result, it is today a fact that Malta's attitudes towards developments in the Mediterranean are, as a consistent act of policy, increasingly being moulded within the frame of thinking of European, and more specifically, southern European countries. One of Malta's strongest arguments for membership of the European Union is precisely the enrichment that, through its Mediterranean location and perspective, it brings to the European security equation.

As my Prime Minister, Mr. Edward Fenech Adami, recently emphasized,

> "it is worth remarking that the duality in Malta's inspiration on Mediterranean issues is not unique".

It is a duality shared, to different degrees, by coastal States to the North, South, East and West, and which today altogether coincides with the perspective outlined by the French Foreign Minister, Alain Juppé. In his statement to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Juppé stated that France would like to see Europe organize a forum for cooperation involving all Mediterranean States and would be making this one of the main goals of its forthcoming presidency of the European Union. Malta welcomes this approach.

Efforts have not been lacking to generate some form of extended dialogue that would deal with issues focused on wide-ranging Mediterranean concerns. Malta has traditionally sought to encourage such efforts in the conviction that the security and stability that would result from a process of consultation and cooperation in the Mediterranean are not simply desirable objectives at the regional level but also constitute an essential dimension of European security.

The CSCE continues to gradually seek new opportunities for the involvement of non-participating Mediterranean States in its activities. We have also proposed the concept of the Council of the Mediterranean, based upon the methods and approaches of the Council of Europe. Malta, together with 10 other Mediterranean States, is currently involved in a project for the launching of a Mediterranean forum. Similarly, the proposal for a Council of the Mediterranean has a special attraction because it promises to support a sufficiently broad and flexible agenda and to permit from the outset a properly structured participation by both Mediterranean and interested extra-regional States in the process of building up a Mediterranean dialogue. At the same time, we also recognize that this, and related initiatives, do not constitute ends in themselves, but only means towards achieving a common objective: the promotion of peace and stability in our region. For this to be realized, we must be able to adopt pragmatic approaches, especially in our search for and utilization of initiatives for functional cooperation, without, however, relinquishing our overriding political objectives and ideals.

The search for security, be it at the regional or the global level, ultimately transcends institutional issues and touches upon the political will of the parties involved. It is in the engendering of this political will where it is still lacking that we must all exercise our deepest commitment. My delegation is confident that, with the right political will, this Committee can make a significant contribution in this direction.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the observer of the Holy See, His Excellency Archbishop Renato Martino.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See): Mr. Chairman, I wish to extend congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this important committee. I also extend best wishes to the other officers of the Committee.

On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, at this time of review, renewal and reform, all States are challenged to concentrate on one of the central purposes of the Organization: to save succeeding

generations from the scourge of war. This is very much in the mind of the Holy See, recalling the memorable words of Pope Paul VI, addressed to the General Assembly in October 1965:

> "Never again one against another, never, never again! ... Never again war, war never again! Peace, it is peace, which must guide the destiny of the peoples and of all mankind!" (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1347th meeting, para. 33*)

Despite this appeal and despite the efforts made by this Committee through the years, wars, internal conflicts, guerrilla warfare and terrorist attacks persist. The continuing discord in the world prevents us from celebrating peace. Yet we may take some satisfaction from the higher level of understanding of what is required today to achieve true peace. In the post-cold-war era, security requires disarmament, yes. But more than disarmament is needed. A new understanding of security was underlined at the historic Security Council summit in 1992:

> "The absence of war and military conflicts amongst States does not in itself ensure international peace and security. The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to peace and security." (*S/PV.3046, p. 143*)

To its credit, this Committee, which has expanded its horizons to deal with security in its broader dimensions, is now advancing the recognition that peace and security are dependent on socio-economic factors as well as on political and military elements. Although there is not yet agreement in the Committee on an integrated agenda for security, there is a growing understanding that the non-use of force in international relations, economic and social development, respect for basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the need to preserve the environment are all closely related and provide the basis for enduring and stable universal peace and security.

The search for a security system that can be supported by all States characterizes the coming anniversary. What frequently appears to be a slow pace forward, with the inevitable backward steps, need not be a reason for discouragement. The fact remains that the world is undergoing a transformation of massive proportions, with peace, development and democracy more closely interlinked than ever before. Humanity is poised to move forward. The vastness of this agenda taxes the international community's ability to deal with it. This ought not to overwhelm us, but should rather inspire us to work more determinedly together for the good of all.

Disarmament, both conventional and nuclear, is an inescapable dimension of this new security agenda. The Holy See has consistently insisted on the need to take concrete steps towards complete and general disarmament, including the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. My delegation has stated before the Committee that the world requires a post-nuclear form of security. The aim is to achieve a non-nuclear regime. Significant measures have already been taken towards the total elimination of chemical and biological (bacteriological) weapons. Similar agreements must progressively be reached in the nuclear field.

All nuclear-weapon States must reconsider the place of nuclear weapons in their national security policies. The efforts of all nuclear-weapon States are needed if nuclear disarmament is to become a reality and the non-proliferation regime effectively strengthened.

The conference of States parties to the Treaty for the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in 1995, will allow the international community to test its political will concerning the implementation of the stringent conditions of Article VI of the Treaty. Each of the parties, non-nuclear as well as nuclear, has pledged:

> "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating ... to nuclear disarmament, and ... on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

The nuclear-weapon States bear a particular responsibility in this regard. Their agreement to cease nuclear-weapons testing and to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty as rapidly as possible will give proof of the seriousness of their intent.

While a comprehensive test-ban treaty would reduce what could be considered the discriminatory nature of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, there are other parallel steps to be undertaken. These include the complete cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes; steady reduction on the part of all nuclear-weapon States of their nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, and assurance of the security of the non-nuclear-weapon States. This programme of action would be of inestimable value in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons to other States. In

this respect, we welcome the efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on a regional level.

In our times, humanity suffers from many armed conflicts, fought almost exclusively with conventional weapons and fed by a proliferation of arms which is often simply taken for granted. Sowing arms to the four winds could well result in reaping the whirlwind of war on one's own soil. Arms transfers raise serious moral problems that must be addressed. The Holy See, through the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, recently published an ethical reflection on these problems, entitled *The International Arms Trade*. This publication is intended to mobilize new forces for the control and radical reduction of these transfers.

Fortunately, interest in the international control of arms transfers has increased, as evidenced in the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. This favourable moment must be seized and arms transfers effectively controlled and radically reduced. The Holy See therefore supports expanding the Arms Register, which in its first two years has established its usefulness, to include wider definitions of weapons systems beyond the present seven categories. Transparency is fundamental to the strengthening of measures regulating the transfer of conventional arms. It is an indispensable confidence- and security-building measure.

Further, dealing effectively with illicit transfers of arms, many of which are small arms, must be given higher priority on the international agenda. This trade is closely linked to conflicts, mercenary operations, terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking and other destabilizing activities. Strict measures on the national level concerning the sale or transfer of light arms and hand weapons are a necessary, if preliminary, step towards international control.

In this time of armed conflict, land-mines cause unacceptable damage to civilian populations. Even after the cessation of hostilities, they continue to maim and kill. The victims are very often innocent children. As the Secretary-General has noted:

> "It is clear that if future generations are to have any relief from this egregious humanitarian burden, the international community must take measures to limit the production, use and sale of anti-personnel land-mines, with a view to achieving a complete ban." *(A/49/1, para. 771)*.

The Holy See requests the international community to address this question with the greatest urgency.

Moreover, the clearance of mined terrain is a massive problem. Some 110 million mines remain buried and an estimated 2 to 5 million more were laid last year alone, while only about 100,000 were removed during the same period. To signify its support of the humanitarian operations of the United Nations in mine clearance, the Holy See has made a symbolic financial contribution towards the work of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre.

The coming review conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects should allow States to strengthen their resolve to ban the production and transfer of other types of inhumane weapons including, for example, new types of laser weapons that would permanently blind an adversary. The Holy See strongly supports efforts in this regard.

It must not be forgotten, however, that efforts to limit the disastrous effects of war and armed conflict do not replace the indispensable measures required to prevent them. On the eve of the second half-century of the United Nations, every State and all States together are called upon to renew the determination expressed at the time of its founding. States then committed themselves not only to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, but also to reaffirm their faith in the dignity of the human person and to promote, in freedom, social progress and better standards of life for all. The realization of all these commitments would contribute not just to the survival of all people, but to the enduring peace for which they long.

Mr. Sukayri (Jordan): At the outset, Sir, I should like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election, and to pledge to you all my delegation's fullest cooperation and support.

Your predecessor, Ambassador von Wagner of Germany, and his colleagues deserve our gratitude for their achievements and dedication last session.

Before I tackle the issues of international security and disarmament on our agenda this session, I should like to refer to the positive developments which have taken place this year in the region of the Middle East. There is no doubt that such developments as the Jordanian-Israeli Treaty, which was initialled last week and which will be

signed the day after tomorrow, will have a great impact on regional security and will help build confidence in the region, thus constituting an important step on the road towards a just, comprehensive, and durable peace in the Middle East.

The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction has become a top priority on the international agenda, simply because the proliferation of such weapons poses a grave threat to international peace and security and thus constitutes a major concern for the international community.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), of which the review and extension conference will be held next April, is the backbone of the international non-proliferation regime. My country, Jordan, has been a strong supporter of the Treaty since its accession to the NPT. However, we believe that the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, along with security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and the universality of the Treaty, are essential before an indefinite extension of the Treaty can take place. The meagre progress which the Conference on Disarmament has achieved so far towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty does not encourage us to believe that such a treaty will be concluded very soon. The controversy over security assurances, as well as the reluctance of some States to accede to the Treaty, makes the prospect for an indefinite extension of the NPT look very gloomy.

We share the appeal made in this Committee, on behalf of the European Union and by some other delegations, to all countries which have not yet acceded to the NPT to do so as soon as possible, and we commend steps taken recently by Algeria and a number of other countries in this regard. We also reiterate our call for the placement of all nuclear facilities, especially in the region of the Middle East, under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Besides security concerns relating to the threat of nuclear proliferation, uninspected nuclear facilities raise the question of human and environmental safety, which is of the utmost importance to my country.

As part of its active participation in the peace process, my country is participating in good faith in multilateral negotiations on arms control and disarmament. We are hopeful that these negotiations will soon lead to effective and verifiable arms-control agreements between the States of the region. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would be a major achievement. We fully support this goal, and believe that such a step would enhance confidence and eliminate a major threat to regional security, in addition to its contribution to worldwide general and complete nuclear disarmament.

For the second consecutive year, we would like to quote from the "Study on effective and verifiable measures which would facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East", contained in document A/45/435 of 10 October 1990, which stated that:

> "Adherence to the NPT by all States of the region — and notably by Israel — would be a most significant milestone. Pending such a measure, the acceptance by Israel of safeguards on the Dimona facilities would be an important move towards the establishment of a zone and could be realized well in advance of its adherence to the NPT." *(A/45/435, para. 181).*

The momentum that the conclusion of the Jordanian-Israeli Treaty has created in the Middle East should be maintained. My delegation believes that a positive step such as accession by Israel to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the placement of all Israeli nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards would definitely lead to the maintenance and further enhancement of this momentum. The elimination of a major threat to regional security would also contribute to confidence-building, which is essential to pave the way towards more progress on the other tracks of the peace process. A Middle East free from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction would undoubtedly be different from the Middle East of today: the most volatile region ever known.

Transparency in armaments is undoubtedly of the utmost importance to confidence-building, and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is the main instrument by which such transparency can be achieved. My country has been a staunch supporter of the Register and has provided the Secretary-General with the required data on Jordan's arms transfers. We have also participated actively in the negotiations conducted by the group of governmental experts on the expansion and development of the Register. We regret, however, that no progress has been achieved in this regard, but are hopeful that another attempt, accompanied by the political will to develop the Register, will come about before too long.

My delegation would like to stress the need for a mechanism at the international level to stop the illicit transfer of arms — both conventional and non-conventional. We also support all efforts leading to the elimination of the

threat of anti-personnel mines. In this regard, my country has provided the Secretary-General with a comprehensive technical report on the status of anti-personnel mines in Jordan. As a non-mine-producing country, Jordan commends the voluntary export moratoriums now imposed by some States, and is focusing its attention on the question of demining.

My delegation reiterates its call for the initiation by the Conference on Disarmament of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material that can be used for the manufacture of nuclear explosive devices. Last session we supported General Assembly resolution 48/75 L in this regard and will support any text on this subject this year.

Continued efforts to convert weapons industries in the former Eastern bloc to peaceful uses, and efforts in other parts of the world to redirect resources from military to peaceful civilian purposes are highly commendable. We are hopeful that such measures may become possible in the Middle East very soon. One of the positive results of the peace process in that region should be a major shift from the arms race to cooperation in security and socio-economic development. Such a shift would certainly eliminate a major source of insecurity in its broader sense. Threats to security do not emanate exclusively from the accumulation of weapons, but also from poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation. Hence the need for economic and social development.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as Chairman of the First Committee at the present session of the General Assembly. The Committee will have to deal with some very serious and sometimes contentious issues of fundamental concern to the international community. I have no doubt that under your chairmanship the Committee will succeed in making an effective contribution to the ongoing debate on the various issues. I should like also to thank Ambassador von Wagner of Germany for his tireless efforts during his chairmanship at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

My country has a deep interest in disarmament issues, and follows the debate very seriously, since these issues are of great significance to us. The outcome of debates and negotiations on disarmament issues, in addition to having major implications at the global level, affects us at a regional level as well. Since our positions on various disarmament issues have been elaborated in detail on previous occasions, I shall be brief here in outlining the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran on several important issues.

I turn first to nuclear disarmament and the 1995 conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The end of the cold war and confrontation between the two major blocs provided the hope that the international community would seize the opportunity to make progress on various aspects of disarmament. The aim of such efforts is centred on the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and on reductions of conventional weapons. Unfortunately, however, the action taken so far on the most important issue of disarmament, namely nuclear disarmament, have not been promising. We have not yet seen any move, or heard of any intention, by nuclear-weapon States towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. The continued existence of vast stocks of nuclear weapons with enormous destructive capacity still poses a significant threat to humanity. We believe that non-proliferation in itself will not succeed in achieving nuclear disarmament if it is not coupled with the elimination of nuclear weapons. Now the time is ripe for the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations on the destruction of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework with a target date.

In order to ensure a successful review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its possible extension for a fixed period or periods, it is imperative that nuclear-weapon States ensure the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, it is imperative that the right of all States parties to the Treaty to develop the peaceful use of nuclear energy for economic and social development be guaranteed and that existing restrictions in this regard be eliminated. At the review conference, we will also have the opportunity to examine the prospects for a comprehensive test-ban treaty and a comprehensive, verifiable treaty on the prohibition of fissile material. In this respect, we greatly welcome the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The members of the Conference on Disarmament should seize the opportunity now to redouble their efforts towards the early conclusion of a comprehensive and verifiable treaty banning all tests in all environments, including non-explosive detonating or laboratory tests, binding on all States without exception. The treaty should also commit all States parties to closing their nuclear test sites and to destroying any equipment specifically designed for testing.

Furthermore, as we strive to attain the goal of prohibiting all testing before the 1995 NPT conference, the option of amending the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty should be openly discussed in the First Committee at this session. This option could provide us with the best avenue, should it prove impossible, because of the technicalities involved in the verification system, to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty by early 1995.

We are concerned, however, that the Conference on Disarmament negotiations on a cut-off treaty have not been started because of the lack of consensus on the scope of such a treaty. The conclusion of a treaty banning the production and stockpiling of fissile materials would be a significant contribution to our collective efforts towards nuclear disarmament and should therefore be pursued enthusiastically.

We also need to examine the possibility of States not parties to the NPT acceding to the Treaty, with particular attention to the situation in the Middle East and to the refusal of Israel, with its unyielding nuclear programme, to open its nuclear facilities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It should be realized that the continuation of discriminatory policies by nuclear-weapon States that practise selective proliferation rather than non-proliferation would pose a major threat to peace and security in the Middle East and would hamper the success of any disarmament initiative in that region.

The chemical weapons Convention is the first successful global attempt to control and eventually eliminate a class of weaponry that threatens humanity, while simultaneously providing for harnessing the knowledge and technology that created these evil instruments for the greater development and well-being of the peoples of the world. The chemical weapons Convention is therefore more than just a security treaty. For the majority of its members it also represents an instrument which should ensure the development of an important industry.

Since the chemical weapons Convention employs the most extensive and comprehensive inspection mechanisms to verify the non-proliferation of chemical weapons in a non-discriminatory manner, any other unilateral restrictions against the States parties would be contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Convention. Restrictions by the Australian Group on the pretext of export control and monitoring must be removed for all States parties to the chemical weapons Convention without exception. Such controls in the chemical field may apply only to countries which are not parties to the Treaty. For the States parties to the Treaty, only the provisions of the Conventions would apply.

The preparatory work at The Hague, which has otherwise moved forward smoothly, has been marred by difficulties in arriving at solutions on some significant and contentious issues. In fact, most of the questions that had been resolved politically during the negotiations have met with contradictory interpretations and positions. As anticipation mounts for the Convention's entry into force, efforts need to be intensified to resolve pending issues, including particularly those relating to the definition of chemical weapons, inspection procedures, challenge inspections and old, abandoned, dumped and buried chemical weapons, as well as fundamental issues of peaceful use, in order to ensure finalization of the preparatory work in 1995.

The same is true for the biological weapons Convention. The current discussions on the establishment of a verification system will surely succeed if they are coupled with a firm commitment to the free flow of material and technology for peaceful use — an undertaking with a direct impact on the development of the developing countries in the field of health. The arbitrary limitation of transfers of material and technology for peaceful purposes has also had an adverse impact on the formulation of verification machinery related to the biological weapons Convention. We welcome the decision of the Special Conference of States Parties to the biological weapons Convention, held recently in Geneva, to mandate a working group to formulate specific measures to ensure the full and effective implementation of article X, on peaceful use, avoiding any restrictions against States parties.

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to transparency in armaments as a confidence-building measure that would facilitate the negotiations of disarmament and arms-control treaties. In this context, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms can serve as a real confidence-builder only if it is expanded to include data and information on all types of conventional weapons, including holdings in other territories, military support commitments by other States through bilateral or multilateral agreements, and weapons of mass destruction in all their aspects. This was the basic thrust of General Assembly resolution 46/36 L of 1991.

At the same time, we must also be able to deal with massive military production, particularly by major producers. Unfortunately, since the end of the cold war we have seen new trends in the conventional-arms marketplace,

and the initial euphoria of peace has been replaced by the expectation that large-scale violence will be part of the international scene.

In the post-cold-war era, reductions in national defence spending by most major arms-exporting nations have forced the arms industries to seek foreign weapons contracts to replace declining domestic orders. For such sales to materialize, tension and confrontation must be developed and must persist. If the international community does not take proper action to benefit from the positive post-cold-war environment, we will be faced very soon with new areas of contention. Only by moving towards lower levels of production can we hope that transparency in armaments will continue to serve the intended objective.

Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand): On behalf of the Thai delegation, I extend warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee. I believe that, with your able guidance, the First Committee will complete its work in a successful and constructive manner. My congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee. I assure you, Mr. Chairman, of the Thai delegation's full support and cooperation in the work of the Committee. Allow me, too, to pay tribute to your predecessor as Chairman, Ambassador von Wagner of Germany, for his excellent work in guiding the Committee last year.

The diminishing probability of super-Power military confrontation has presented the world community with an unprecedented opportunity to make real progress in the field of disarmament, particularly in the sphere of nuclear weapons. Indeed, several positive breakthroughs towards reducing levels of weapons of mass destruction have been made in the past several years. The conclusion of a chemical-weapons Convention and the establishment of a United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in 1993, along with the historic tripartite Agreement between the United States, Russia and Ukraine, which made possible the full implementation of the START I and START II Treaties, are among the notable steps towards arms control, as well as general and complete disarmament.

However, reductions in arms do not necessarily bring about a reduction in tensions and crises. Arms are still there, for offence or for defence, and the world community has lately been confronting a new surge of political and economic conflicts in various shapes and forms. These are the result of ethnic and religious tensions, militant nationalism and illicit arms transfers, as well as of poverty and underdevelopment. In short, the risks to international peace and security remain as high and complex as ever.

It is no surprise therefore that, despite years of discussion, arms control continues to be one of the most important agenda items in the effort to promote international security. And, despite increased cooperation in the field of arms control and disarmament, the threat from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction still exists as a challenge to the international community.

In this regard, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to be an important legal instrument of the disarmament process. My delegation wishes to see universal participation in and, more important, full adherence to the NPT. Thailand believes that the NPT is of vital importance and should be extended when States parties deliberate this matter in April 1995. The 1995 NPT extension Conference should be viewed also as an opportunity to consider constructive proposals to strengthen the Treaty. The security interests of all countries, and particularly the non-nuclear States, should be enhanced and protected. My delegation is of the view that the question of the indefinite extension of the NPT will be determined by whether or not the Treaty can gain the confidence of all States. At this juncture, without a convergence of views, my delegation feels that a definite time-frame would be more acceptable.

Thailand also takes this opportunity to welcome the new States parties to the NPT — Belarus and Kazakhstan — and hopes that Ukraine will accede as a non-nuclear State in the near future.

In the area of a nuclear-test ban, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the voluntary moratorium declared on nuclear tests has continued to be observed by most of the nuclear-Powers. However, a multilateral legal instrument to prohibit nuclear testing is needed. My delegation notes that the Ad Hoc Committee on a nuclear test ban has made significant progress in its efforts to draft a treaty. A comprehensive test-ban treaty would play an important part in global nuclear non-proliferation efforts. We sincerely hope that the negotiations will be brought expeditiously to the successful conclusion of a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban Treaty. Timely conclusion would also contribute to a satisfactory outcome of the 1995 NPT review conference.

As a supplementary measure to strengthen the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the prohibition of the production of fissionable material would be most welcome.

With that objective in view, the Special Coordinator — a post set up by the Conference on Disarmament — should be widely supported so that it will be possible to obtain consensus on appropriate arrangements for negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

There has been a tragic surge in armed conflicts at the local and regional levels, and we continue to see that conventional arms are still the main cause of human suffering. Illicit transfers of conventional arms pose no less a threat to international peace and security than does the proliferation of nuclear weapons. My delegation therefore supports the restrictions on conventional-arms transfers in so far as such restrictions do not infringe upon the right to self-defence accorded to States under the United Nations Charter.

With regard to anti-personnel land-mines, contingents of the Royal Thai Army have assisted in the demining operations in Cambodia, both directly and under United Nations auspices. Having helped many victims, including our own civilians who live on the border with Cambodia, we are fully aware of the barbaric effects of these devices. Thailand fully supports the moratoriums on the import and export of anti-personnel land-mines and strongly urges all States to do likewise.

My delegation welcomes the progress made at The Hague towards implementing the chemical-weapons Convention. The Thai Government continues to work on the process required for ratification of this Convention and is in the process of establishing a national authority to oversee the implementation of the Convention. We believe that international training programmes to provide competent inspectors and local officials will facilitate the establishment of a national authority and of effective national verification procedures. In preparation for effective implementation of the chemical-weapons Convention by regional countries, the Governments of Australia and Thailand jointly organized a regional seminar in Bangkok on 9 and 10 May 1994.

Significant progress has been made in the field of transparency in conventional-arms transfers. My delegation supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which was established last year, as a means of promoting preventive diplomacy. My delegation agrees that transparency in conventional-arms imports and exports could result in better understanding and could build confidence among nations. This might, in turn, prevent prevailing uncertainties from escalating into actual conflicts.

In this regard, the Thai agencies concerned are considering participating in the arms Register. However, we believe that this is only a beginning. We should not rest until the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is developed into a universal and comprehensive mechanism covering all types and categories of arms — stockpiles, indigenous production, and weapons undergoing research, development, testing and evaluation — as well as industries with the potential to be turned at short notice to the production of arms.

Thailand believes that, with or without weapons, peoples and countries are prone to conflict if they do not trust each other. Therefore, we firmly believe in reducing the risk of conflict; one way of doing so is through confidence-building.

My delegation is gratified to note that regional institutions continue to contribute to this confidence-building. In Europe, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is a mechanism for cooperative security in the region. In Asia and the Pacific, security cooperation among members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other countries in the region, through the ASEAN Regional Forum, has taken off. We are proud that the first Forum session was held in Bangkok on 25 July 1994 with the aim of stimulating the confidence-building process and developing a sense of security as well as transparency measures through the effective consultative Asia-Pacific Forum. Thailand believes that the Forum will serve as a very useful vehicle for confidence-building, as openness and dialogue are fundamental if we are to create trust and good relations. Such confidence-building, in turn, could lead to the process of arms reduction in the region.

Thailand appreciates the implementation of measures and the substantive support for the initiative for peace and disarmament provided by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. Through its various meetings, the Centre has encouraged fruitful regional and subregional consultations for the promotion of confidence-building measures and the enhancement of disarmament and international security. Thailand will continue to support and participate in the activities and initiatives of the Centre.

While there have been tangible achievements in arms control, much on the agenda remains to be accomplished. Besides the various agenda items at this forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, we will be participating in January in the fourth meeting of the Preparatory Committee

for the review and extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In April, a decision has to be made on an extension of the NPT. Also next year, the chemical weapons Convention is expected to enter into force, and vigorous negotiations on the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty will continue. Working against the backdrop of the present international environment, as the most suitable multinational forum for fostering global consensus on the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the First Committee today finds itself at a very opportune time. Gone should be the day when items before the Committee are used as tools to reaffirm or challenge the superiority of one or another major Power. Gone also should be the day when, for the majority of States, NPT, CTBT, CWC and many others are mere acronyms. These items before us are more significant to world peace than ever before. Let us try to reach out with unity of purpose and seize this unique opportunity to present the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations with really a credible outcome of the First Committee's work this year.

Mr. Shambos (Cyprus): May I first congratulate you, Sir, and the other officers of the Committee on your election. I am confident that under your wise guidance the goals of the Committee will be fully achieved.

It is a fact that for decades following the establishment of the United Nations, almost every effort to make progress towards disarmament and arms control was aborted by the rigidities of the cold war. The latter's demise has certainly opened up exciting new possibilities for the international community to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the concomitant arms race.

In the context of newly evolved, wider international developments, the arms control agenda is now being effectively addressed. In the last two years we have seen major achievements, the most important of which was the signing of the chemical-weapons Convention in early 1993.

Furthermore, the potential commitments we hope will be entered into in the near future — the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the strengthening of the biological-weapons Convention with the development of an effective verification regime, and efforts to arrive at a mandate for a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive devices — will certainly keep up the momentum that has been created in the disarmament field. Much still needs to be done, however. The smuggling of nuclear material and the continuing operation of unsafe nuclear plants pose a great threat to humanity. The dangers affect us all because of their global dimension.

At its 1992 summit meeting, the Security Council rightly stated that the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The United Nations and each Member State must shoulder the responsibility for overcoming both old and new threats. We must therefore continue our efforts to erect barriers against the proliferation of both non-conventional and conventional weapons.

It is true that, unlike nuclear, biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction and the technology needed for their use, conventional weapons are not a question that lends itself easily to the global disarmament agenda. International activities in this area have been directed mainly against the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons and towards the need for transparency. A significant achievement to this end was the creation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which we believe could be further developed and upgraded in such a way that it would encourage universal participation. We look forward to its extension beyond transfers to cover production and holdings so that it may become a real international exercise in transparency in conventional weaponry.

Equally important are efforts to halt illicit and covert arms trafficking through tighter controls and closer cooperation and coordination.

There is also a compelling need to strengthen the inhumane-weapons Convention — in particular to extend control over the use of and trade in land-mines, given the indiscriminate injuries and death they cause to civilian populations long after conflicts have ceased. My delegation has sponsored the relevant draft resolution calling for a moratorium on the export of land-mines. We also support in this regard the creation of a United Nations mine-clearance fund to protect civilian populations.

Next year, an objective of particular significance will be the conference to renew and extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains a remarkable accomplishment and the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. The NPT remains a meaningful instrument in progress towards complete nuclear disarmament. A decision next year to extend the Treaty will allow us to secure its benefits in perpetuity. Indefinite extension would create a most favourable environment where psychological pressures for

continued nuclear disarmament will be maximized. We therefore support the Secretary-General's proposal that the Treaty be extended indefinitely and unconditionally when its term expires in 1995. The extension arrangements should be equitable and verifiable and must be based on collective commitments by all States for a world free of nuclear weapons. In this regard we share the view that security assurances should be granted to all States signatories to the NPT.

At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that, under the United Nations Charter, disarmament and arms control are an integral part of international peace and security. We fully support the ideas of the Secretary-General on disarmament as outlined in his report, "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" (A/C.1/47/7).

So long as military threats to security exist, the disarmament and arms control process will continue to be an essential element of international security. We therefore subscribe to the view that, although a global military conflict is now far less probable, military conflicts limited in scope pose a new and difficult challenge. The ratio of the number of new or continuing conflicts to that of conflicts that have been successfully prevented or resolved is of concern. It indicates that the current international security environment is far from satisfactory and that further efforts must be made to find new and improved ways of preventing and resolving conflicts. In this respect, the close correlation between arms control and the prohibition of force deserves our most urgent attention as the temptation to apply military force and exhibit military might in regional and local conflicts grows stronger and more menacing.

Since our admission to the United Nations in 1960, my delegation has been committed to the quest for general and complete disarmament in the context of the efforts of the Organization to establish international peace and security. We have consistently supported the view that genuine and lasting peace can be created only through the implementation of an effective international security system, as provided for in the United Nations Charter, since disarmament is part and parcel of the United Nations system of collective international security. Naturally, United Nations efforts are aimed also at liberating arms-directed resources and funds for use in social and economic development, which in turn contribute to economic stability. For, as the Secretary-General has stated, there can be no sustainable peace without development and no development without peace.

It is in this context that I refer now to the proposal of President Clerides, presented before the General Assembly at its current session, for demilitarization and disarmament in Cyprus. We firmly believe that this proposal, if seen by all those concerned in its proper perspectives and dimensions, could serve as the proper instrument to address effectively the grave security and other concerns of the people of my country, including the termination of the continuing Turkish military occupation of almost 40 per cent of the territory of Cyprus, thus paving the way for an overall solution of the Cyprus problem in conformity with the Charter and with United Nations resolutions. Moreover, we believe that it could also serve as a significant contribution in its own right to the cause of security and peace in the volatile eastern Mediterranean region and beyond.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize the paramount responsibility and great expectations that emerge for our generation in the face of existing challenges, shaping trends, fluid developments and promising potentials. While pondering the vast spectrum of issues, choices and approaches, let us not fail to be guided by reason and justice as the ultimate forces for galvanizing our determination to produce proper decisions and rightful actions, lest we, in the words of the philosopher of old, Heraclitus of Ephesus,

> "exceeding the limits and measures of reason, which permeates the universe, be caught by the Furies, and fatal judgement be passed upon us all".

Such a judgement would be passed upon us not least, I might say, by succeeding generations, for mankind can afford to pay no more in human blood and misery for our own repeated but avoidable follies.

Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan): Mr. Chairman, I begin by joining previous speakers congratulating you and other the officers of the Committee on your unanimous elections. Your long years of experience and association with the United Nations and international affairs, Sir, provide us with every assurance that the First Committee will conduct its proceedings in a successful manner. I also extend a word of appreciation for the excellent manner in which your predecessor, Ambassador von Wagner of Germany, accomplished his duties as Chairman of the First Committee during the past session of the General Assembly.

The delegation of Afghanistan takes part in the general debate on disarmament and international security with

particular interest. As history attests, Afghanistan's tranquillity has always been a source of peace for Asia, just as its turbulence has always been a major contributing factor to the region's instability. With a somewhat turbulent situation in the country as a legacy of 14 long years of foreign aggression, we have turned to the United Nations, as a neutral party which cannot have a direct interest, to play a role in complementing our national efforts towards the consolidation of peace, security and stability in our country, thus enabling us to contribute effectively to the maintenance and further consolidation of regional and international peace and security.

There have always been two main sources of threats against regional and international security: political rivalries between sovereign nation-States and constant advances in military technology. These two causes sometimes interact. The political objectives of sovereign nation States, and in particular major Powers remain incompatible, while advances in military technology and the arms race seem to have been dramatically reduced as a result of the end of the cold war and of world polarization. It is as a result of this incompatibility that new situations threatening regional and international peace and security are emerging in the form of increased regional confrontations and violations of human rights and of the principle of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

Our world is today no longer one of bloc confrontation. The lack of coordination between the interests of blocs no longer interferes in or aggravates every international conflict. In this atmosphere, there are more opportunities for collective international efforts under the United Nations umbrella to change the totality of international relations and to improve the quality of the international environment in such a way that conditions can be created for lasting solutions to key problems. It is therefore essential to strengthen all instruments available for the maintenance of balance, the peaceful settlement of disputes and strict adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. We see a particular need for confidence-building measures — of which transparency is an important component — to create assurances for States that the political objectives and legitimate interests of one sovereign State do not go beyond its boundaries. Regional organizations can play an important role in the creation of such trust and confidence.

Today the threat of a nuclear confrontation has been drastically diminished. However, the existence of nuclear armaments continues to jeopardize the objective of a safe world free from the threat of nuclear conflict, of which there can be no victors. That is why Afghanistan has always advocated general and complete disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament under effective international control. In negotiations on the reduction of armaments, the great Powers should take into account the principle of equal security for all, irrespective of size, military strength, socio-political systems or political and economic importance.

Disarmament should go hand in hand with the prevention of the use of force because, even if total disarmament were achieved, asymmetry in military and economic power would continue to be a problem for the security of small and medium-sized countries. It is equally important that effective steps be taken towards a reduction of conventional armaments. This is particularly important because the destructive power of conventional weapons is increasing and because such weapons have been and continue to be used in all conflicts in the post-War period — in which, according to the available statistics, there have been more casualties than in the two World Wars.

On the issue of the security of States, in spite of the United Nations Charter, numerous resolutions, covenants and bilateral and multilateral treaties, neither peace nor the security of all nations has been achieved or institutionalized. Armed conflicts, local wars, aggression and intervention continue to take place. Gross interference in the internal affairs of States by open or covert measures, the exploitation of internal difficulties and disputes, and the intrusion of individual interests still exist. This is particularly so in the case of countries that have yet to overcome the effects of major crises, such as my own, Afghanistan. The illegal export and sending of arms to zones of conflict seem to have been a contributing factor to such gross interference and to violations of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

In appreciation of the need to curb the illicit transfer and use of conventional arms, the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session adopted resolution 48/75 H, in which it invited Member States to take appropriate enforcement measures directed at ending the illegal export of conventional weapons from their territories. It also requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Governments on effective ways and means of collecting weapons illegally distributed in countries, and to submit a report at its forty-ninth session.

In response to this request, the Secretary-General has submitted his report, contained in document A/49/343 of 29 August 1994. Based upon the reaction of States, it is a matter of regret to us to see that Member States have yet fully to recognize the negative and destructive role which the availability of illegal arms and their transfer to conflicting groups in troubled zones can play. This problem persists in many regions and territories, including Afghanistan, where thousands of innocent people have perished as a result of the use of such illegal weapons, transferred from abroad and placed at the disposal of the opposition in the conflict. The delegation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan anticipates that at its current session the General Assembly will look into this problem with greater seriousness.

In this connection, my delegation welcomes the proposal made by the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan in his address during the general debate, on 4 October, of an embargo on the sale of weapons, ammunition and other supplies to regions in conflict. My delegation also welcomes the statement of Ambassador Hoffmann of Germany, who stated that the European Union, together with a number of countries of central and eastern Europe, intends to submit a draft resolution concerning a code of conduct for conventional arms transfers. The sensitivity of the issue of illicit arms trafficking and its contribution to the exacerbation of conflicts and violations of human rights are all reasons for enacting appropriate provisions on this matter in any such code of conduct.

One aspect of the items under consideration is the relationship between disarmament and development, and the impact of the arms race and military expenditures on the development of human communities. The adverse implications of the current magnitude and continuing escalation of global military spending, in spite of some positive changes, is still a matter of concern. The morally untenable distortion of global priorities that has resulted in a growing diversion of scarce human, financial, material and technical resources to armaments, at the expense of basic human needs and economic and social progress, should be remedied and, indeed, reversed.

Afghanistan has always advocated the indefinite extension of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. The extension of the Treaty scheduled to be considered in 1995 continues to be vital for the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons and in the achievement of nuclear disarmament. We are also committed to the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace. We view them as a supplementary global effort towards the attainment of the objective of a world free from the scourge of nuclear weapons and the threat of their use. The adoption of the Addis Ababa draft treaty for an African nuclear-weapon-free zone was another major development to this end.

The substantial progress made in the Geneva negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty is a considerable achievement towards concluding an effective multilateral and internationally applicable treaty. There is no doubt that this is another step bringing us closer to non-proliferation and disarmament.

Let me turn now to the subject of anti-personnel mines and land-mines. One of the obvious conclusions to be drawn from the war of occupation imposed on Afghanistan by the former Red Army is that the aggressor proved to have no legal obligation to care for the victims, the majority of whom were civilians, and included children.

The world community has always been concerned about unnecessary injuries to combatants and to civilian populations. These could be eliminated if we prohibited and restricted the more inhumane and indiscriminate methods of warfare. However, it is sad to see that military considerations too often come before humanitarian concerns. In our country, the most inhumane types of warfare were tested, including chemical and biological warfare. Fourteen years of war left more than 1.5 million dead, more than 2 million disabled, more than 1 million orphans and the same number of widows.

The ugliest phenomenon is the existence of more than 10 million anti-personnel land-mines in the country. When we look at the children, women and elderly with no limbs, or with only one, we are left to ponder the question of whether the laws of war are actually not merely a civilized interlude between pre-industrial and advanced industrial barbarism.

In spite of the increasing sophistication of anti-personnel weapons, they remain the most horrifying means of tacking political tasks of global significance. It is hard to believe that in the long run such means can stand in the way of necessary social changes. All they can do is greatly increase the human cost of those changes. For this reason, much stands to be gained by any measure the international community may adopt to restrict the development and use of the anti-personnel weapons that are threatening human communities, particularly in conflict zones, by the rapid proliferation of new and dangerous types of such weapons.

The decision of several States, including some mine-producing States, to impose export moratoriums on anti-personnel mines as a preliminary step seems to be a positive one, although the final answer still appears to be a total ban. It is our expectation that, before the first review conference of the Convention on the Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, to be held in late 1995, adequate awareness and political will should be created not only with regard to the prohibition of their use but also on the production, manufacturing, stockpiling and transfer of those inhuman weapons.

Afghanistan is ready to submit its views to be taken into consideration with other amendments submitted to Protocol II, on land-mines and booby traps. However, we are still concerned with respect to the scope of application of the land-mines Protocol. The interpretation of the phrase "international character" may be flexible, although the implications of the use of these inhuman weapons, whether the conflicts are regional or international in character, are the same.

Mr. Kunda (Zambia): At the outset, allow me join other speakers who have already congratulated you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I also congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their elections.

I should also like to take this occasion to extend a special welcome to Mr. Peter Goosen of the Republic of South Africa, who has finally come to join us as our Rapporteur. His election was a manifest and eloquent demonstration of South Africa's welcome return to the United Nations family, a return we all embrace and happily witnessed.

I pledge my delegation's fullest support and cooperation to you, Sir, and to all the other Committee officers.

We meet once again in the First Committee to discuss issues relating to disarmament and international security in an atmosphere devoid of the erstwhile futile nuclear-arms race and its attendant cold-war polemics. But we are still living with the legacies of that era, none more unsettling than the continued existence of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. By definition, these are not weapons of war; they are indeed weapons of mass destruction.

The continued existence of such weapons is a serious anomaly that can only be rectified through expeditious and speedy nuclear disarmament in this post-cold-war period. This brings me to the issue of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as the NPT regime, which, to all intents and purposes, is the engine of nuclear disarmament. Zambia acceded to the NPT three years ago because of its firm belief that that Treaty is the cornerstone of international peace and security, to which the Treaty regime has made a singular contribution since it was instituted. It has served the international community well, for the overwhelming majority of its adherents have steadfastly stood by their Treaty obligations to forgo possession of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, Zambia is fully aware that the NPT is an imperfect creation. To be sure, it is as inequitable as it has been from its inception. One of its distinguishing features is, without doubt, its discriminatory nature. In April 1995, the NPT States parties will revisit the Treaty at the twin-purpose review and extension conference to be held after 25 years of the Treaty's operation. Zambia attaches immense importance to that conference. The NPT will face its hardest test there, especially in the light of the call by some States parties for an indefinite and unconditional extension.

Let me, therefore, hasten to say that Zambia is in favour of an indefinite extension of the NPT. However, it is the unconditional component of the extension of the Treaty that is causing serious problems for my delegation. An unconditional extension is problematic because of its import for the cause of general and complete disarmament, to which Zambia is unequivocally committed.

To begin with, if the NPT is unconditionally and indefinitely extended in April 1995, its discriminatory features will be codified and will thus become immutable. Furthermore, we believe that there would be no incentive whatsoever for nuclear-weapon States to move towards nuclear disarmament, as called for in article VI of the Treaty.

In the circumstances, Zambia does not support an unconditional indefinite extension. In my delegation's considered view, such an extension would not serve the interests of the international community. It would only serve the partisan interests of the handful of nuclear-weapon States. Zambia believes rather that there is every ground to predicate the indefinite extension of the NPT on progress in the field of nuclear disarmament.

To this end, Zambia wishes to see tangible progress on a number of significant collateral disarmament measures that would put us on the road to general and complete disarmament under effective and verifiable international control. Paramount among such measures is the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Such a treaty would freeze existing nuclear inventories and prevent qualitative improvements in nuclear-weapons systems. It would, if achieved, be a singular milestone in the race to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective and verifiable international control.

Indefinite extension of the Treaty would also be served by the adoption of a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for explosive purposes, otherwise known as a fissile material cut-off. My delegation therefore calls for the expeditious conclusion of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on this important disarmament matter.

Furthermore, my delegation is of the considered view that an agreement on negative security guarantees for all non-nuclear-weapon States, coupled with an agreement on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons, would also go a long way in contributing to brighter prospects for an indefinite extension of the NPT. Similarly, provision of adequate technical assistance to all non-nuclear-weapon States to ensure the availability of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes on a non-discriminatory, predictable and long-term basis, would also enhance the chances of an indefinite extension. For now, it is common knowledge that article IV of the NPT, which provides for the fullest possible exchange of equipment, material, scientific and technological information for peaceful uses of nuclear energy, has not been implemented.

Another important collateral disarmament measure relates to nuclear-weapon-free zones. Adherence to these zones by nuclear-weapon States would also significantly contribute to paving the way towards the indefinite extension of the NPT.

Enthusiastic compliance with the provisions of the NPT cannot be left to non-nuclear-weapon States only, as has been the case consistently over the years. Nuclear-weapon States too must do their part with similar enthusiasm, for their contribution in that regard is important, indeed critical, for launching the international community on the highway to general and complete disarmament under effective and verifiable international control. Their realization of the above six areas of international concern in the field of disarmament would constitute nothing less than progress towards an indefinite extension of the NPT.

In the larger context of disarmament, might I observe that it is now six years since the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the outcome of which is well known to all of us. In the intervening period, a lot of water has passed under the bridge. The most momentous development since then has been the end of the cold war, which in its heyday polarized and immobilized international relations for more than four decades. We are now in a new era in which there is a need to undertake a comprehensive assessment of efforts towards general and complete disarmament under effective and verifiable international control. To that end, my delegation wishes to reiterate the call made by the non-aligned ministerial Conference, held at Cairo last June, for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament at an appropriate time.

Our quest for nuclear disarmament, truly important though it is, should not make us lose sight of the imperative need for conventional disarmament. There are various hotbeds of conflict, both old and new, some of which have been menacing international peace and security since the founding of the United Nations. These conflicts have been and continue to be sustained by the use of conventional armaments. Today, Africa has the lion's share of these conflicts. These fratricidal conflicts in turn consume the lion's share of the national treasures of the countries concerned and thus retard their economic development. Zambia therefore calls for the early conclusion of a convention on conventional weapons. We believe that this would give meaning and substance to disarmament in all its aspects.

In the foregoing remarks, my delegation has reaffirmed its total commitment to disarmament in its comprehensive perspective. Now more than ever before, disarmament is imperative: it is imperative to reflect the post-cold-war era; it is imperative to consolidate the welcome trend towards the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means, as enshrined in the Charter of our Organization. Disarmament has now become as integral a component of the cause of sustainable development as of durable peace.

Mr. Altmatov (Kyrgyzstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. My delegation is ready to cooperate closely and constructively with you in the Committee's work.

At present, we are going through a difficult stage in the fulfilment of the principal responsibility of the United Nations, the maintenance of international peace and security. While there is evidence on the one hand of positive and encouraging factors in the disarmament process, particularly with respect to nuclear disarmament, on the other hand, a fact of this post-confrontational period is the trend towards the regionalization of the basic challenges to international security. We believe that this makes it essential to take greater account of the regional dimension of international security and to work to improve tried and true approaches and machinery.

Let me briefly state our position on the fundamental items on the First Committee agenda. In Kyrgyzstan's view, it is vitally important for international security that we strive to reduce and ultimately eliminate the nuclear component of existing threats. We welcome progress in the nuclear-disarmament dialogue between Russia and the United States.

My country has acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Kyrgyzstan did this out of a conviction that the Treaty's non-proliferation regime is a key element for strengthening security. We believe that the enactment of binding, clear-cut, meaningful security guarantees for non-nuclear States parties to the Treaty would create excellent conditions for universal adherence to the Treaty. We welcome the work towards such guarantees, and hope it will be successful.

We favour the use of regional measures to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. One such measure would be the declaration of Central Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This would be an important concrete contribution to strengthening security in the Asian region.

Kyrgyzstan attaches great importance to the speedy conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. In that connection, we welcome the moratorium on nuclear testing being observed by France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. We believe that China's joining the moratorium would be a positive step that would create conditions conducive to progress in this area.

In the context of nuclear issues, I should like to touch upon one particular problem that is of direct concern to my country. My country, Kyrgyzstan, was one of the main suppliers of raw uranium for the nuclear-arms programme of the former Soviet Union. We have inherited from this numerous caches of processed uranium. These caches are concentrated in the very epicentre of natural disasters such as landslides, mudslides and floods, which have become more frequent recently, posing the threat of ecological catastrophe on a nationwide scale. We would be very grateful if the world community could help us eliminate this danger.

Kyrgyzstan has signed the Convention banning chemical weapons and is prepared to fulfil our commitments under that Convention.

The growing trend towards the exacerbation of regional conflicts has brought to the forefront the question of how to control conventional weapons. My country favours the effective use of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We would also support the proposed moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines.

As we see it, arms control and disarmament are an important and integral part of multilateral and regional steps to maintain security and stability. Regional efforts are particularly important in such areas as confidence-building and the control of conventional weapons, as attested to by the experience of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

In this connection, we would like to support Kazakhstan's initiative to convene a meeting on cooperation and confidence-building in Asia and Uzbekistan's proposal to organize, under United Nations auspices, a standing conference to deal with security problems in the region. These forums could provide the necessary framework for the development of regional cooperation and dialogue in order to strengthen stability and security in Central Asia.

We think it obvious that the First Committee should bear tremendous responsibility with respect to furthering the disarmament process and to strengthening global peace and security. It is our hope that the efforts being made to enhance the effectiveness of the First Committee's work will yield positive results. The delegation of Kyrgyzstan, for its part, is ready to make its own contribution to our common cause.

Mr. Kayumov (Tajikistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Since my delegation is speaking for the first time at this session of the First Committee, may I very cordially congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the post of Chairman and offer my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau as well.

Peace-building through diplomatic channels and peace-keeping by military and civilian means presents complex problems. Dealing with them confronts the United Nations with new and sometimes extremely complex tasks. The situation in Tajikistan and at the Tajikistan-Afghan border, as is well-known, remains a tragic and explosive one. The escalation and the internationalization of the conflict may well lead to its spreading beyond the borders of Tajikistan to the territories of other countries of Central Asia.

Achieving peace and stability in Tajikistan will be possible only through dialogue. A prompt cease-fire and the disarming of all armed groups, with a display of good will and tolerance on the part of the parties to the conflict are necessary to reach a solution. No victory on the battlefield can provide a guarantee of durable peace, stability and security in Tajikistan.

The Government of Tajikistan is convinced that the security of the country and that of other countries in the region is indivisible. As a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), we faithfully coordinate all our activities in this area with the other members of the CIS. In this way, we try to strike a balance of interests between our own country and the other States of the Commonwealth. Normalization of the situation on the Tajik-Afghan border and stabilizing the situation in Tajikistan are interrelated and interdependent processes. For that reason, the Heads of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan have signed an agreement to set up collective peace-keeping forces in the territory of Tajikistan. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five States officially notified the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, of this in their joint letter of 30 September 1993.

The creation of these collective peace-keeping forces as a regional agreement concluded in accordance with the principles and purposes of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations represent an important contribution by those countries to ensuring peace and stability in the Central Asian region.

At a meeting of the Heads of State of the CIS on 20 October in Moscow, the mandate of the joint peace-keeping forces in Tajikistan was extended for five months. It was decided to upgrade the status of the Commander of the peace-keeping forces to enable him to take bolder action and to help the legitimate Government of Tajikistan.

The joint strategic policy of these five member States of the CIS is to defend the southern border of Tajikistan. Their joint peace-keeping efforts are a decisive element in the combined effort to deal with the crisis on the Tajik-Afghan border. If a broader approach is taken to this question, as was emphasized by the Head of State and Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Rakhmanov, in his statement at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly on 30 September this year, it will also be possible to outline a whole new concept of security for the entire Central Asian region. We have not given up hope that the Security Council will see its way clear to considering this initiative again by holding a meeting of the Council to discuss the situation in and around Tajikistan and the question of giving the joint CIS peace-keeping force the status of a peace-keeping operation under United Nations auspices.

The Charter of the United Nations contains useful recommendations on relations between the United Nations and regional organizations in the peaceful settlement of local disputes. We favour the further enhancement of the collective capacity of the United Nations accurately and impartially to assess the implications of new internal conflicts.

There can be no doubt that the root cause of the crises in Tajikistan and in neighbouring Afghanistan are extremism, fanaticism and the incitement of inter-ethnic, interregional strife through division of the population into "us and them".

The Tajik people profoundly condemn the actions of extremists and terrorists, and oppose those who are trying to impose tyranny upon them. We request the international community to double and, indeed, triple its efforts to avert such a danger. Violence is repugnant in all its forms and the parties to the Tajik conflict must refrain from trying to solve their problems by force. Those who try by all means, including killing, to seize power in Tajikistan cannot be worthy of any support from the world community. In this context we welcome the arrival in Tajikistan and the deployment in the most explosive areas of the republic of the first group of 11 United Nations military observers. The purpose of their mission, in close cooperation with the joint commission composed of representatives of the Government and of the Tajik opposition, is independently and impartially to monitor the observance of the inter-Tajik agreement of 17 September 1994 on a temporary cease-fire and on the cessation of other hostilities on the Tajik-Afghan border and within the country.

The delegation of Tajikistan believes that any delay in settling the Tajik conflict will be to the advantage of those who are eager to divide the Tajik nation: those opposed to the integrity of Tajikistan.

The long-suffering people of Tajikistan condemn the actions of those forces who employ foreign mercenaries and weapons from the territories of adjacent States and thus set themselves against the nation.

Peace and security are not heaven-sent gifts. They need to be struggled for. And it is indeed a complex and relentless struggle for each and every person in their own country, their own region and the world as a whole. At the same time, it is necessary staunchly to defend the universal principles of human dignity and freedom.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.